

November 13, 2003

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

**California Department of Transportation
Ridgewood Grade Safety Project, Highway 101 Post Mile 37.9/38.3
(WDID# 1B03099WNME)**

Mendocino County

On June 2, 2003, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Ridgewood Grade Safety Project in Mendocino County. The application was deemed complete on November 3, 2003. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the state associated with tributaries to Forsythe Creek and the Russian River, Forsythe Creek Hydrologic Sub Area 114.33.

Forsythe Creek is a fish-bearing perennial stream considered habitat for federally listed threatened Coho Salmon and Steelhead and is located approximately 0.6 miles west of the project. The streams within the project area, however, contain no anadromous fish habitat. The project will include extending four existing culverts, filling 219 linear feet of streambed. In addition, at the outlet of one of the culverts a 0.029-acre wetland has developed and will be filled.

Caltrans proposes to construct a 0.073-acre wetland at the outlet of the extended culvert to compensate for the filling of the wetland and streambeds. The new wetland will replace the filled wetland at a 2.5:1 ratio. The goal of the compensation project is to replace or exceed the functions and values of the habitat affected by the transportation project. Soils and plant material from the filled wetland will be excavated and stockpiled for the construction of the new wetland. The new wetland will be supplied with water similarly to the filled wetland including culvert drainage, groundwater flow, precipitation and surface flow from uplands. The constructed wetland will be replanted with appropriate wetland plants. Caltrans has also submitted a monitoring plan to assess the wetland's performance.

Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control impacts from sediment discharge, and replanting to prevent erosion.

Caltrans has applied for a 1601 streambed alteration agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game and Nationwide Permit No. 14 has been submitted to the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

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The Regional Water Board, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA.

Regional Water Board staff propose to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act Authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this notice. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Mona Dougherty at (707) 570-3761 or at doug@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

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